

Ceremonial music of the Bektashi ashîqs

Block 1:

The Bektashi order is a mystic organization, which emphasizes the ascetic life and the mystical approach to the knowledge of God, within the religion of Islam. Even though it has been founded two hundred years after Haji Bektashi Veli's death, he is considered as the spiritual master of the Bektashi order. A quotation from Haji Bektashi Veli maybe the best way to illustrate his path towards to God: "Whatever you are looking for, it is neither in Jerusalem nor in Mecca, you will only find it in yourself..."

For the followers of Bektashiism and many other mystic Sufi orders it is believed that "there is only one door to reach the God; but there are many ways lead to that door." This explains why there are countless amount of Sufi orders in Islam and within some of these orders, which regard the usage of music is a legitimate way to reach the God. Calling the name of the God repeatedly with certain rhythmical patterns is just one of the many ways to express one's love to the God. The ashîq (tr. lover), who seeks divine love or the oneness through music and poetry and who give up all worldly things for the love of God, has a crucial role as the transmitter of not just the Bektashi traditions but also many other regional cultural properties.

1. *The twelve Imâms and Invocation to Allâh*

2. *Semah - içeri semahı*

Block 2:

Bektashis perform the Djem through prayers and dance (Semah). Its manifestation in poetry and music uses particular texts, figures, rhythmic patterns and melodies, which are performed according to a certain order.

At the beginning a slow-paced music is performed with the accompaniment of the long-necked lute (Saz/ Bağlama). It is the basic rule, that only Saz or a plucked string instrument similar to it can be used in a Djem ritual. The number of instruments can be varied from 2 up to 12 in different sizes; percussive instruments, as we see in in some other Sufi orders, are not welcomed since they disrupt the divine atmosphere.

3. Ali Ekber Çiçek – *Meydan Saz*

Block 3:

After certain prayers have been said, the performance of music and dance can begin. The orally transmitted poems which are sung during the ritual, are called Nefes. Originally, they had been composed by ancient Bektashi poets and ashiks. Mainly the name of the poet is quoted in the last part of the poem, while its musical realization remains anonymous. Nefes' are strongly influenced by the symbolism of elaborated Ottoman and Persian mystic poetry, which has deeply influenced Turkish language, the language of Bektashi ceremonies since the 12th century.

4. *Invocation to the masters of the Order and blessing of the chapel*

5. *Hymns (Nefes by Kul Himmet and Virâni), evocation of the initiation*

Yo-lu-muz on i-ki i-ma-ma çı-kar

Our path is leading to the twelve Imams

Reh-ber-im Mu-ham-med Ah-med-i muh-tar My guide is Muhammed, Ahmed Muhtar

Mür-şüd-üm A-li-dir sa-hib Zül-fü-kar My master is Ali, the owner of Zülfükar

Vi-rân-i kul-un-dur di-va-na gel-dim Virâni is servant, joined the assembly.

(Virâni, Track 5)

Trans. John Kingsley Birge

6. Celestial Ascension and the Banquet of the Forty

Block 4:

The Bektashi Nefes' compositions constitute a great part of profane Turkish folk music; but it kept its religious function among Bektashis until today.

The Nefes can also be performed by one Saz player or, according to region and personal background of the performer, in Turkish classical music style, according to a melodic model called makam. This solo performance is mostly more elaborated and requires virtuosity. Musicality has the same value as the meanings of the text.

7. Ali Ekber Çiçek - *İlahi Dostum Bağına*

8. Musa Eroğlu - *Alamut Semahı*

9. Kâni Karaca - *Derdim Çoktur (Pençgâh Bektaşî Nefes)*

10. Ali Ekber Çiçek - *Derdim Çoktur*